

We just can't wait on political status

By Joaquin P. Perez

Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo is on target with her call for the governor, the Legislature and the Commission on Decolonization to accelerate and intensify the education process on political status options. However, the excuse that federal funding must be secured first further delays any plans for a vote.

Not unlike the war claims issue, which the federal government appears to be delaying in anticipation that all World War II survivors will soon die, it appears that federal officials want to delay the decolonization process until Guam's electorate is so diluted that the argument that a plebiscite is not necessary because we, the community, is satisfied with the status quo gains validity.

Gov. Eddie Calvo and the Legislature should not wait for adequate federal funding. It can be assumed that the federal government doesn't want to provide for a plebiscite, which could result in frustrated indigenous people voting for independence or free association.

A program and budget can be developed by the University of Guam for a plebiscite target date of November 2016 or 2017. The

educational process is so important it should be turned over to UOG, with UOG's greater capacity and capability of conducting meaningful educational programs devoid of political interference or preferences. The Commission on Decolonization should digest the transcripts of these educational sessions, conduct necessary public hearings, and field and ask appropriate questions to ensure that all options are covered thoroughly without political innuendos.

Bordallo's address on the issue of political status would be more sincere and forceful if she commits efforts and resources to convincing Congress to adopt a binding resolution mandating that the federal government accept and honor, in a timely manner, the results of that political status plebiscite. Unless Congress mandates such a binding resolution, any plebiscite would be exercises in futility and meaningless.

We have seen, on the issue of war claims, that notwithstanding the statutory establishment of the War Claims Commission and the appointment of commission members by the federal executive and the government of Guam, the federal government is not bound to accept the commission's recommendations and could simply wait until all the survivors die, as there are not many more left. Hence the necessity of a lawsuit. With the rate at which our manamok' are passing away, we can no longer depend on sterile and flaccid

political gobbledegook.

Elected officials do not hesitate using the status issue as campaign planks. Simple lip service when officials eventually point to others, saying, "You first."

The governor says he wants to proceed with the educational process but is waiting for federal monies to fund the Commission on Decolonization, thus passing the buck to Bordallo. The chances of adequate federal funding coming is equivalent to a snowball's chance in hell.

The congresswoman is waiting for the governor and the Legislature to do something, yet she exerts no efforts to convince her colleagues that the results of a plebiscite must be respected and honored through a binding resolution. In this sense, the elected leaders of the colonized essentially become the colonizers.

Referring to the war claims issue, the late congressman, and retired general, Ben Blaz, stated: "We have met the enemy and they are us." I think this describes present-day political status efforts.

The late Gov. Ricky Bordallo urged Washington to tell us whether we are fish or fowl. I propose that we, as a people, should tell Washington what we are and that we cannot be content as a colonized people, and that the existing relationship sucks.

Joaquin P. Perez is a resident of Santa Rita.

Transparency hard to find at Legislature

By Robert Klitzkie

The lead sentence in the penultimate paragraph of Sunday's editorial read: "Senators also need to recognize their horrible transparency record. ... such as the measure that ... allowed them to fatten their wallets with unnecessary and questionable retroactive pay. A previous pay raise was implemented without telling the public it had been done."

The editorial closed by admonishing the Legislature to "stop shutting the people out of the process of government." The editorial is right on point, but transparency is where you find it, as will be shown below.

The Legislature, as the popular branch of the government, is closest to the people and should jealously guard the peoples' right to know what their government is doing. Rather than lead by example, the Legislature has established, as the editorial opined, a "horrible transparency track record." Senators routinely disregard the Sunshine Act requirement regarding legislative session dates and agendas.

Two of the three complaints lodged with

Rather than lead by example, the Legislature has established, as the editorial opined, a "horrible transparency track record." Senators routinely disregard the Sunshine Act requirement regarding legislative session dates and agendas.

Sen. Rory Respicio's much ballyhooed FOIA Council dealt with that violation. Of course, the FOIA Council didn't issue opinions on those violations but appeared to "run out the clock" so that those complaints expired with the 32nd Guam Legislature, sub silencio.

Section 12 of the Organic Act requires the Legislature to keep a journal. A legislative journal is like the minutes of a legislative session, showing motions, votes, etc. Go to the Legislature's website and take a look at the legislative journal for July 7, 2014, to see what the journal looks like. Take a good look, though, because that is the last legislative journal posted.

The legislative journal for last Nov. 21, although of great potential interest, is not posted. That's the session that lasted for about an hour in which senators "broke every

law but gravity" to give themselves a raise of \$48,320 per term, with a retroactive kicker of as much as \$15,398.67.

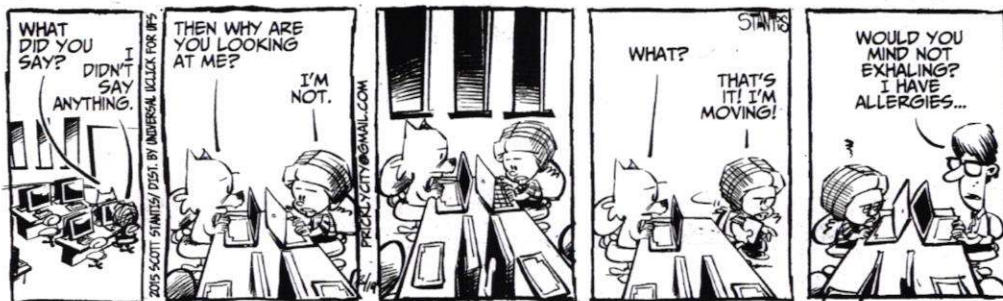
The editorial touched on, "A pay raise ... implemented without telling the public it had been done." This is the raise of \$5,534 per annum (again with a hefty retroactive kicker) that Respicio "discovered" in November of 2011 based on an incorrect interpretation of law. Until an eagle-eyed Pacific Daily News reporter wrote it up in February 2012, Respicio's miraculous discovery went unheralded.

Rather than being the champion of governmental transparency, the Legislature is often the chronic offender. The Legislature does lead by example — unfortunately, usually in the wrong direction. Unfortunate because if senators don't first establish their transparency bona fides by strictly complying with the laws on the books, they won't have the moral authority to hold others accountable, nor to enact the needed more stringent transparency laws.

At the Legislature, transparency is usually very hard to find. However, when it comes to raising their own salaries, some senators have been very, very transparent. In fact, we can see right through them!

Robert Klitzkie is a former senator and a resident of Yigo.

Prickly City



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■ **Sunday: Should Guam and the other U.S. territories be able to vote for president?**

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Make contact

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Thought of the Day

"The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord."

Proverbs 19:3

Don't be angry at God if your own stupidity has ruined your life. Turn to Him for help.

Harvest Baptist Bible College

READER INFORMATION

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Stop,
or I'll

SUE!

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Suing that big company might not get you the big bucks if changes to limit lawsuits go through.

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60¢ on Guam

Commonwealth bill 'could be last'

'Rethink strategy' if no progress, Underwood says

By JOHN OMICINSKI

Gannett News Service

WASHINGTON — A new Guam-Washington political deal must sink or swim in the 104th Congress, Del. Robert Underwood says.

Barring "significant progress" on Guam's search for a new political arrangement with more sovereignty in 1995-96, "We're going to have to



UNDERWOOD

rethink our strategy," Underwood said in an interview.

"This very well could be the last commonwealth bill," Underwood said as he prepared remarks for a House floor speech later this week to press again for a new political arrangement between Guam and the United States.

"I just don't see us doing this two years from now," he said. "Something different, yes, but not this again ... unless we see some significant progress."

Progress, he said, means Capitol Hill

■ Pentagon says Guam impact was overstated. Page 4

hearings (there have been none on a commonwealth bill) and solid indicators of a detailed U.S. government position.

"The federal government has been either elusive, uninterested or deliberately unclear about its response to Guam," he said.

"If you charted out all the energy put into political status and plotted it on a pie chart, 95 percent would have been expended by Guam and 5 percent by the federal government. Inasmuch as that's where we find ourselves, we are running out of patience."

Statehood is always the standard of

discussion, Underwood said, and that always stalls things.

"We say we'd like to negotiate our own air routes, and we're told, 'Not even states can do that.' " Underwood calls that approach "disingenuous" and also discouraging because it doesn't attempt to recognize Guam's position 7,000 miles from the U.S. mainland and at the center of Oceania.

A clinker in the political-status situation, of course, is the Defense Department's stunning decision to close or shrink island Navy bases, costing Guam 2,104 military jobs and 2,665 civilian jobs — a total of 4,769 — between the years 1996 and 2001.

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Aguon going to Hawaii for heart tests

■ Possible heart attack:

Senator 'doing better,' nursing supervisor says

By JOHN E. SCANLAN

Daily News Staff

Democratic Sen. John P. Aguon was in Guam Memorial Hospital's intensive care unit last night recuperating from a possible heart attack, said Bill Philips, the senator's chief of staff.

"It's not 100 percent clear whether it was actually a heart attack," Philips said yesterday.

Aguon's attending physician is Dr. Vincent Duenas.

Aguon, a 51-year-old Tumon resident, was in the hospital when the attack occurred.

"He wasn't feeling well on Sunday and following his doctor's instructions, the senator was admitted to the hospital for observation. I'd say he was pretty lucky to have been there when he had the attack," Philips noted.

The senator's aide said he spoke with Aguon yesterday and found the legislator in good spirits.

"He was asking me a lot of questions about the office. He seemed to be more concerned with legislative business than with his own condition," he said.

Philips explained the senator needs further heart tests that cannot be performed on Guam.

"He'll be going to Honolulu for those



AGUON

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IN THE FSM

'Lot of people are voting' in legislative elections

■ Problems: Many polling places running out of ballots; Guam residents say they never received their absentee ballots

By FLOYD WHALEY

Daily News Staff

Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia cast their votes yesterday in legislative elections marked by low non-resident voter participation and incomplete voter registration lists, officials said.

Early results in the election of national and state legislators are expected sometime today, and final results will not be available for several days, National Election Commissioner Moses Santos said by phone from Pohnpei.

Counting of the national ballots was scheduled to begin at 8 p.m. last night in the four states of the Federated States of Micronesia.

All results will then be called into the central counting station in Palikir, Pohnpei, for tabulation, Santos said. Outer islands will radio in their counts, he said.

Santos said he did not have an exact figure on voter turnout, but he believes it is high within Pohnpei because of the strong demand for the 30,000 ballots that were printed.

"A lot of people are voting," he said. "Many polling places are reporting that

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Michael Henderson/Daily News Staff

Federated States of Micronesia election volunteers Maggie Mesasy, left, and Lalso Pils check names off a registration list at the Tamuning Community Center yesterday while other FSM citizens wait outside the polling place.

Commonwealth